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PITTSBURGH, SATURDAY, APR. 13, 1889.

TWELVE PAGES

THE PENITENTIARY INVESTIGATION.

The question of the penitentiary management has been brought up again by the visit of the Senate Committee and the presentation of formal charges. The charges embrace allegations of cruelty in two distinct cases, and one in which the allegation is rather indefinite, assertions of financial mismanagement, of which, perhaps, the most important is the one that Dr. Mahanek was given a salary after his suspension, and some general charges of favoritism and lack of discipline.

Now that these charges are made the only course left is an open and thorough investigation without prejudice and without fear. THE DISPATCH has criticized the production of anonymous or unsupported charges, and has considered them, when they appeared in that shape, as unworthy of public attention. When supported by their authors, however, they require the hearing which the Senate Committee appears disposed to give. If they are untrue the management of the penitentiary is entitled to the vindication; if they are true the public interest calls for the exposure and abolition of the abuses.

The Senate Committee will furnish an unprejudiced tribunal; and if it makes the investigation thorough, the much-agitated question of the penitentiary management will be settled for good or ill.

IRELAND'S RISING STAR.

Sir Charles Russell concluded his opening for the defense before the Parnell Commission in a way to corroborate the idea suggested by THE DISPATCH some days ago, that the opportunity afforded by the case of the prosecution to put on record a full showing of Ireland's wrongs will be utilized to the utmost. It is always best to remember the proverb that "he who putteth on his armor should not boast himself like him who putteth it off." But it is plain that the advocate of the Irish leaders has made a most favorable impression, when he elicits congratulations from the bench. With this speech backed up by evidence showing the purposes of the Nationalist policy, the evils and wrongs which Mr. Parnell and his colleagues are striving to remedy, and their strict adherence to constitutional agitation, it will go far toward hastening the final triumph of the Irish cause. There could not be a more remarkable instance of falling into the pit dugged for a neighbor, if this trial, which was brought about to ruin Mr. Parnell should result in placing him higher in English opinion than ever before.

QUITE A DIFFERENCE.

The discussion as to the treatment of Pittsburgh by the railroads, makes it pertinent to notice one contrast that has recently been afforded by the trunk lines. Last fall, it will be remembered, Pittsburgh had a Centennial celebration. It was an occasion which was calculated to draw visitors from a large extent of territory, and which did so, even under the unfavorable circumstances imposed by the railroads. The public can hardly have forgotten the difficulty which was experienced in getting the railroads to extend the excursion rate for the round trip, of 1 1/2 times the regular single-trip rate, extended to a limit of 300 miles, or the fact that some of the lines did not even do that.

Seven months later New York has a celebration. The policy of the railroads seems to be very different in this case. One fare for the round trip throughout the trunk line territory is conceded, and beyond that territory the same rate plus \$2. More than that, when the wholesale merchants represent that their customers would like to stay in town longer than for the celebration, the duration of a ticket is extended over nearly two weeks. Need there be any better evidence of the railroad opinion that Pittsburgh is a useful beast of burden, strong enough to carry heavy charges, but not worthy of receiving any special attention?

A COMBINE INDICATED.

The rumors which have been set afloat by the withdrawal of the stock of the American Meat Company from public subscription do more to strengthen the suspicion of a practical monopoly in the dressed beef business than anything else within the public knowledge. It is certain that the new company would have been a strong competitor of the Chicago and Kansas City concerns. That the business should be open to competition is potent on the face of it, and then a new establishment could not in the old one, they are enjoying some extraordinary profits from a combination to suppress competition is hardly less clear. The fact that the new enterprise has suddenly backed down and that the withdrawal was caused by an attack of the Armour crowd or the interests of the Standard Oil men, who were behind the new meat company, in the Cotton Seed Oil Trust, is in line with the facts. It may be interesting to learn that there is a clique that can conquer the Standard Oil crowd, but that fact can hardly compensate for the evidence of a monopoly in a food staple.

MOANS IN McALLISTERVILLE.

Ward McAllister is to be only four months manager of the New York Centennial Ball. No wonder he weeps. He thinks that Mr. Fish and the rest of the Entertainment Committee will keep him up, after the ball shall have proved a dire failure. He will have to concentrate his immense mind upon the control of the ten thousand dancers. To keep

the scored "Four Hundred" from rubbing elbows with the common herd will make the dreadfully vulgar perspiration bead McAllister's brow. Then nine thousand six hundred of the guests will move about that ballroom all unimpeded of the august authority of society's leader, and there will be more tears. It is to be hoped that a bucket brigade will be told off on the night of the ball to follow McAllister wherever he goes, or his lachrymal performance may make the floor slippery. These attendants might carry vials such as the Romans were wont to supply at funerals for the reception of the tears of the deceased person's friends. Lachrymatories filled with McAllister's tears might be sold among the Four Hundred after the ball, and would doubtless swell the Centennial fund handsomely.

The very thought of McAllister fallen from his high estate and mourning the untimely end of his own idea, the culmination of the hope of years, the long-cherished chance of his lifetime, a ball after his own conception, would make even a marble monkey weep. And when there is a sound of weeping in McAllisterville, and when the grasshopper, if it were there, would be a burden, it is somewhat out of tune in the New York Sun to remark in a chipper tone that it is going to be the greatest and grandest centennial celebration ever before seen in this republic. "You can't," says the Sun, "stop it; you can't belittle it, you can lessen its importance by ridicule." Then a few days later it publishes a full report of McAllister's lamentation. It would seem that the New York papers are doing their level best to belittle the celebration and to lessen its importance by ridicule. If they do not succeed it is not their fault. Nor McAllister's.

THE CONSTITUTION DOESN'T COUNT.

Nobody will be surprised this morning—but a good many people through the State must experience a much stronger feeling—at the refusal of the Legislature to consider the Wherry anti-discrimination bill. This simply means that, under the existing regime, no relief need be looked for at Harrisburg. The intimation that Senator Delator and Chairman Andrews are preparing something, misleads no one.

Comment on the attitude of the Legislature would be superfluous. Nothing was asked by the Wherry bill beyond a mere legislative enforcement of those provisions of the Constitution which have lain a dead letter on the books for the past fifteen years. This is the same Constitution which take oath to support. If there were no other reason—if it had not also been abundantly shown that the business interests of the Commonwealth were suffering from such causes as the Constitution sought to prevent—the mere obligation which members take with their seats would have required the legislation they so lightly thrust aside.

But it is not merely pious indifference to constitutional requirements that is exhibited by the vote of yesterday. The Republican party in this State solemnly pledged itself three years ago to a bill against discrimination. This pledge has been studiously ignored. When the Democrats bring in a bill the pledge is distinctly broken and the measure rejected without a pretense of discussion upon its merits.

It is waste of time to inquire what may be the motives which led to this extraordinary line of action. No explanation that amounts to a row of pins is offered. But the question arises: can the Republican managers afford to have the party representatives stand in this attitude? It is not safe for those who think their seats in the saddle firmest to too openly despise the mandates of the fundamental law. Opposition to this same Constitution by the Republican managers put the Democrats in power in Pennsylvania in 1874. Contempt for it now, and blind subservience to corporation interests, may work another change as sweeping at coming elections.

Incidentally, too, the thought suggests itself whether, in such an event, the railroads will be able to congratulate themselves on the enactment of an fair and reasonable measure as Mr. Wherry's, which they have just kicked so contemptuously overboard. The Legislature has spoken. The public will speak later on.

CABLE CAR TAXES.

The discovery, in the Controller's office, that the ordinances under which the cable cars obtained their privileges appear to have released them from the tax on cars which was levied on their predecessors, the street railway companies, is an example of the omissions which are sure to occur in hasty legislation. Few people would dispute the justice of a tax upon these corporations to the volume of their business, and yet, with the precedent of the tax on the corporations to which they succeeded, the point was overlooked altogether. The fact that some of these ordinances were sent through under suspension of the rules may afford a partial explanation of the omission. The error is, however, by no means a vital one. The idea of gaining compensation for the privileges in the streets granted to passenger railways by taxation or by putting the privileges up at auction is an extremely futile one. All that the companies pay in that way they must get back from the public, and so that policy ultimately resolves itself into the medieval practice of raising revenues by tax-farming and the sale of monopolies. The fact is that these privileges should be based on the just ground of the benefit to the public by cheap and rapid transit. If the full advantage is secured by such a competition as will reduce charges to the point which yields the companies a fair profit on actual and unwavering cost of construction, the privileges confer an unqualified public benefit. If the companies by combination are able to load up their enterprises with a huge structure of watered stocks, and force dividends upon them by higher charges than would be levied under fair and free competition, the loss of a few thousand dollars in taxes will be of little moment beside the burden which is placed on the public by means of the greater abuse.

WHERE WAITING MAY PAY.

A reasonable view of the further growth of Pittsburgh may dispense altogether with the need of a law to sell the old university and other vacated county buildings on Diamond street, by making clear that the wisest policy is to keep them. Insufficient enlargement has, heretofore, been the rule. Of course, the splendid edifices which now adorn the hill looks bad, after the narrow quarters of the past; but it is fairly reasonable from the present rate of growth hereabout that before ten years the business offices will fill and overflow every available inch of space there. When, at the planning of the new building, someone proposed to have the jail share the Court House lot, Judge Ewing, with excellent foresight, predicted that in a few years the latter would be none too large, occupying the whole

square, for the work to be done. His opinion is being borne out. He prophesied again in a similar vein about the vacated premises. We think he is again correct.

It would be awkward for the county now to sell the vacated premises only to buy them back, or add to the property, at a great advance of value before 1900—which is now but eleven years off. As business runs, and as the signs of the Pittsburgh of the near next century fashion themselves on the sky, judicious rental does look a better policy than hasty sale.

It might be taken as bearing an instructive significance for the reallocation of Senators, that, immediately after his first skirmish with them, the President takes into consideration the project of locating his headquarters in the War Department.

JUDGE WALLACE seems to entertain a little doubt on the Western Union Telegraph Company's claim that it owns the streets of New York.

Under ordinary circumstances the fact that Mr. Strauss is a Democrat out-and-out would be of little consequence. It is only necessary under a Republican administration. But there are other things to be considered in this case. The Rev. Dr. Allison, of this city, told me recently that never had Christians and Christians enjoyed so much protection in Turkey as they have since Mr. Strauss went to Constantinople. This happy result, Dr. Allison said, was due to Mr. Strauss' efforts at all times. He obtained from the Turkish Government permission for the collection of the Bible throughout Turkey.

This is the more remarkable because Mr. Strauss is by faith a Hebrew. He has earned the respect and gratitude of American missionaries in that part of the world, and their influence is likely to count for something with President Harrison.

Possibly Mr. Strauss' good deeds may be news to the New York Press.

A FEW mouse traps and an addition to the force of cats employed by the management would enhance the comfort of the public at the Grand Opera House.

On Monday night last a mouse had a very amusing time on the floor of the parquet, while "Caprice" was in progress on the stage. I do not think any woman seated in the parquet saw the mouse. When it appeared during the campaign last to the lady who sat beside me, she betrayed such unmistakable symptoms of alarm that I added I was only joking. All the same the mouse was there, and kept crossing the stage, and dodging back and forth among the seats, never showing the smallest sign of fear.

Still, Mr. Will, it is dangerous to allow mice to make a rallying point of the parquet while an audience is there. A small mouse may be enough to cause a panic.

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By the way, owing to the disturbance of the west-bound track by the descent of debris from the excavations, the Cleveland express, going west, early yesterday morning, took the east-bound track from Superior station to the switch at Millville, where it crossed again to the proper track.

No matter how perfect a railroad's block system may be, it always seems suggestive of danger to me to run a train for several miles on the wrong track. It was just such an experiment on the London and Northwestern Railway in England that resulted in the horrible accident at King's Cross last summer, in which a number of lives were lost. The Southwestern runs under a very strict block system, too.

SOME idea of the ferocity of the storm-bursts yesterday may be gathered from the fact one of them drove 60 men and women into one Manchester line horse-car that evening. It is not altogether probable that at least six of these passengers stayed on the car long enough to escape the worst of the shower, and then slipped off without paying fare.

The equipment of nearly all the horse-cars is in a state of decay, and none of them make the least attempt to meet for any increased demand, like that caused by the thunder storms of yesterday. The horses who have to drag so heavily laden and over-faded cars are the most pitiable of creatures. Street directors probably had nightmare last night.

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If that Russian sensation is not exploded before long, the world will be forced to conclude that the dynamite bomb was.

Mr. F. B. GOWEN is quoted as questioning Mr. Carnegie's motives and alluding to his past record. This may be pertinent or otherwise; but considering the source whence it comes it is rather amusing. If every one who has been mixed up with discriminations and railroad combinations, is to be ruled out of court, where will Mr. Gowen stand?

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THE TOPICAL TALKER.

A Large Audience Astonished Her—Mrs. Strauss' Oath to Stay in Turkey—Chas. Allison's Visit to Constantinople.

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The contribution of this little genius was as enjoyable as in the great program of the Exposition fund benefit at the Bijou Theater yesterday afternoon.

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WORKING HARD TO SAVE LIFE.

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METROPOLITAN SMALL TALK.

Barnum in Business for Some Time. (NEW YORK BUREAU SPECIALS.)

NEW YORK, April 12.—P. T. Barnum, the great showman, is very much annoyed at the reports published in a New York newspaper to-day, that he intended to retire from the show business. "Why, I am actually growing young again," he said to a DISPATCH reporter, "and I hope and expect to die